



MEMO

To: Mayor McClure and Members of City Council

From: Clay Goddard, Director of Health

Date: December 4, 2020

Re: COVID-19 Update and Need for Ongoing Response

Overview

Springfield's Road to Recovery Plan Phase 3A has been in place since July 16. The Phase 3A orders relaxed some COVID-19 restrictions while implementing a face covering/masking requirement for areas of public accommodation. It will sunset January 14 if no action is taken by City Council. Based on evidence cited by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the White House Coronavirus Task Force and the World Health Organization, as well our own local experiences with the effectiveness of these measures, it is the firm recommendation of the Springfield-Greene County Health Department that the current phase continue for an additional 90 days. At that time future extensions should continue to be studied and considered.

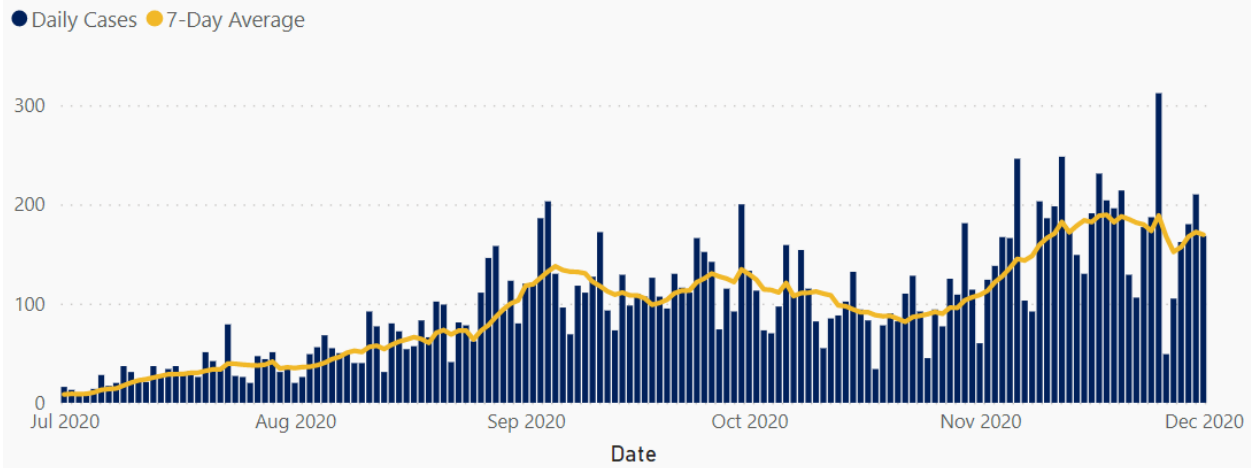
Background on COVID-19 in Greene County

As of December 3, 2020, there have been 15,643 cases of COVID-19 and 216 deaths in Greene County. Since the beginning of July, there have been three periods of decreasing average daily case counts. The 7-day rolling average peaked at 168 new daily cases on December 5, 2020 (chart 1).

The sustained high number of daily cases since September is consistent with the predictions by the nation's leading infectious disease specialists, who warned early on that numbers would increase dramatically once the weather began getting cooler and people started congregating indoors.



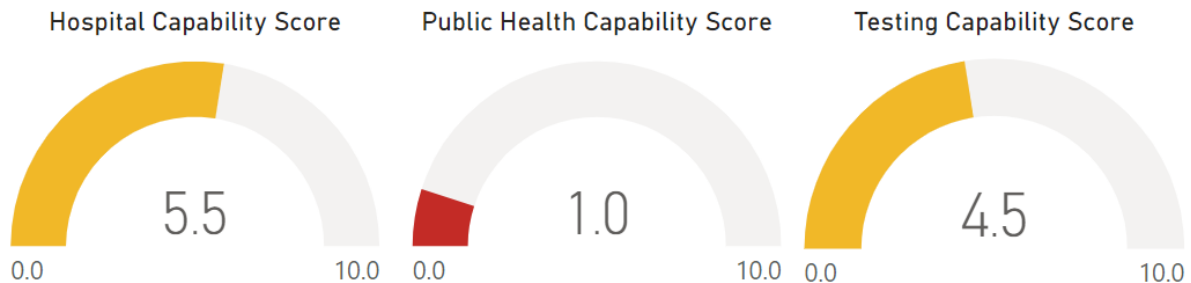
Daily Cases and 7-Day Average



At the present time, the county's hospital capability score is 5.5 out of 10 and our Public Health Capability Score is 1.0 out of 10, representing our community's decreasing capability to respond to additional cases. While not one public health prevention measure is enough to improve these capability scores alone, it is imperative we continue all mitigation efforts, including masking and occupancy restrictions, so that we may have some capacity to continue to respond to this pandemic.

Capability Dials

(These dials will be updated once weekly on Mondays)



Continued evidence around masking

There are a growing number of studies showing the effectiveness of masking. Both experimental and epidemiological data support community masking to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) now points to [45 studies](#) demonstrating the effectiveness of the measure. One [study](#) investigated infected passengers aboard flights longer than 10 hours. All passengers were masked and there were no infections reported in other passengers and crew in the 14 days following exposure. An [economic analysis](#) cited by CDC found that increasing universal masking by 15% could prevent the need for lockdowns and reduce associated losses of up to \$1 trillion or about 5% of gross domestic product. A [comparison](#) of Kansas counties found new cases per 100,000 population increased 100% in counties without mandates compared to a 6% decrease in counties with a mask mandate. Additional [studies](#) demonstrated reductions in mortality associated with universal masking.

Masking in Other Missouri Communities

While Springfield continues to be one of the few southwest Missouri communities that require masking, others have adopted mandates recently, following the growing evidence of the measure's effectiveness. In Christian County, for example, Nixa and Ozark implemented masking ordinances on October 21 with positive outcomes. In the 28 days leading up to the masking ordinances, there was a 62% increase in positive COVID-19 cases in Christian. In the 28 days following the implementation of the masking mandates, the increase was 49%.

According to the Missouri Center for Public Health Excellence (MOCPHE), communities with a masking mandate include:

- [Adair County](#) (until rescinded)
- [Audrain County](#) (Advisory through 1/15/2021)
- Barry County (through 12/31/2020)
- Boone County (through 12/8/2020)
- Branson (Taney County) (until rescinded)
- [Callaway County](#) (through 3/1/2021)
- Cape Girardeau (Cape Girardeau County) (extended 10/27/2020)
- Clay County (until rescinded)
- [Clinton](#) (Henry County) (until rescinded)
- [Franklin County \(through 12/20/2020\)](#)
- [Henry County](#) (until rescinded)
- [Jackson County](#) (7/1/2020)
- [Jefferson County](#) (through 12/21/2020)

- [Johnson County](#) (reinstated 10/12/2020)
- [Joplin](#) (Jasper County) (through 2/28/2021)
- Kansas City (through 1/16/2021)
- Lafayette County (until rescinded)
- [Livingston County](#) (until rescinded)
- [Marshfield](#) (Webster County) (through 12/10/2020)
- [Maryville](#) (Nodaway County) (through 1/31/2021)
- Nixa (Christian County) (through 12/31/2020)
- North Kansas City (through 1/16/2021)
- [Ozark](#) (Christian County) (through 12/31/2020)
- Pettis County (until rescinded)
- Platte County (7/16/2020)
- [Rolla](#) (Phelps County) (through 2/2/2021)
- Springfield (Greene County) (through 1/9/2021)
- [St. Joseph](#) (Buchanan County) (until 2/14/2021)
- [St. Louis City](#) (updated 11/14/2020)
- St. Louis County (updated 11/17/2020)
- [West Plains](#) (Howell County) (through 2/2/2021)

The individual adoption of masking orders is critical. Despite recommendations by the White House Coronavirus Task Force, our healthcare partners, health departments and local communities, there is no statewide masking requirement in Missouri. Without the blanket approach of a statewide mandate, the complete benefits of masking will not and cannot be felt by local communities. Springfield is not an island. People from outside our city, in jurisdictions without masking requirements, work here, shop here, eat here, access health care and other services here. While Springfield has a population of 167,882, the daytime population surges to 250,628 due to commuting.

How Masking Works

COVID-19 spreads mainly from person to person through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice (e.g., while shouting, chanting, or singing). These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

The general philosophy behind a cloth face covering is that while it does not directly protect the wearer, it likely keeps the wearer—symptomatic or not—from spreading the illness—whether or not they know they are infectious.

The cloth face coverings recommended here are not surgical masks or respirators. Currently, those are critical supplies that should be reserved for healthcare workers and other first responders. Cloth face coverings are not PPE.

Future of COVID-19 Response

Currently, there are two COVID-19 vaccine candidates under Emergency Use Authorization review by the Federal Drug Administration. A determination on these requests will be made later this month. If approved, vaccine to prevent and reduce the severity of COVID-19 are anticipated to be available in our community before the end of 2020. Vaccinations will begin with both health care personnel and individuals within long term care facilities. Moving into this phase of the community response to COVID-19 is extremely encouraging and is expected to be the most effective tool we have. Our department will be working closely with local and regional partners to implement the state's plan to vaccinate Missourians.

In the coming weeks and months, these efforts will help to shed light on the need for ongoing community mitigation efforts such as occupancy restrictions and mask use. As the community begins to emerge from elevated disease, hospitalizations and deaths due to COVID-19, a set of indicators and thresholds will be established to serve as benchmarks for the community to consider removing elements of the current ordinance. When that time comes, the department recommends first considering removing of occupancy restrictions, followed by a removal of the mask mandates.